AMATEUR RADIO NEWSLINE(tm) REPORT #1271 - DEC 21, 2001

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1271 with a release date of Friday, December 21st, 2001 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. A national ham radio society is asked to train new hams for government service. This story is first on this weeks Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1271 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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THE EDUCATION SCENE: HAM TRAINING LEADS TO SA GOVERNMENT JOBS

A government agency has asked a national ham radio society to help train new hams. The reason. careers with that agency. Its happened in South Africa as we hear from Q-News Graham Kemp, VK4BB:

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In South Africa, their Department of Communications contacted the SARL with the request to train seventeen post graduate students as amateur radio operators. These students had already qualified in different fields, some technical and some in the Information Technology fields. There were nine ladies and eight men. From next year they will be employed by the Department of Communications, and the idea was to give them some experience in the field of radio communications.

Training was done by Henry Chamberlain, ZS1AAZ, over a period of one full month. In addition to lectures, the students could see practical demonstrations of amateur radio and they spent one period building and testing a Morse Code practice oscillator. They also visited ZS1AAZ's home shack. The seventeen students had already proved their ability by passing their previous studies successfully. It was therefore no surprise that they ALL passed the amateur examination.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I’m Graham Kemp. VK4BB, of Q-News.

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The seventeen will be assigned specific jobs with the South African Department of Communications in early 2002. (SARL, Q-News)

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SPECTRUM SHARING: FCC SAYS YES TO HIGHER POWER UNLICENSED TRANSMITTERS AT 2.4 GHZ

The FCC has approved issued new rules permitting certain unlicensed Part 15 devices operating between 2405 and 2450 MHz to use higher power, but under significant restrictions. The band is allocated to amateurs on a co-secondary basis. Amateur Radio Newsline’s Norm Seeley, KI7UP, takes a look at the FCC action:

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According to the C-Q Magazine website, the decision was adopted on December 11Th. In it, the FCC approved a petition by Sierra Digital Communications, Inc. to permit unlicensed fixed point-to-point transmitters in the band to operate at field strengths of up to 2500 millivolts per meter. This is a tenfold increase over past power limitations.

Sierra Digital Communications manufactures and sells equipment for wireless data communications, including high-speed wireless computer networks and Internet links. The ARRL had opposed Sierra's petition on the basis of increased risk of interference to amateur and amateur satellite operations. This is because the downlink from the AO-40 satellite is in the 24 GHz band.

But the FCC said it believed the restrictions it is imposing on the higher-power transmitters will provide sufficient protection to other users. This includes industrial/scientific/medical equipment, radar and Earth exploration satellites, in addition to amateur radio. The new rules require highly directional antennas and high frequency stability of transmitters.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Norm Seeley, KI7UP.

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In its decision, the FCC singled out an ARRL comment where the League clamed that Part 15 devices are permitted by the Communications Act of 1934 only where they have no interference potential to licensed services. The Commission called the League's interpretation of the law overly conservative. It said that its rulings to date appropriately provide a means for allowing unlicensed devices to share spectrum with licensed services with little risk of interference and adequate protection to licensed service. (CQ)

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HAM RADIO AND THE WAR: MARS ON THE AIR FROM THE WAR ON TERROR

Ham radio is making it possible for those fighting the war against terrorism to phone home. This as the ARRL Letter announces that Army Special Forces on duty in Islamabad, Pakistan, and in other undisclosed locations have begun keeping in touch with home via MARS -- the Military Affiliate Radio System.

Phone patches provided by the Military Affiliate Radio System make it possible for troops to call their families in the US from areas where commercial communications channels are not available. Amateur Radio operators enrolled in MARS provide the connection between the Military Affiliate Radio System stations deployed overseas and the telephone system back home.

During the Vietnam War, phone patches were a major source of comfort to families and service members alike. MARS also responded during Operation Desert Storm. (ARRL)

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BREAK 1

Wishing you a Happy Holiday from the United States of America, we are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world, including

the Great South Bay Amateur Radio Club repeater, W2GSB, serving West Babylon New York.

(5 Sec Pause Here)

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HAM RADIO AND THE WAR: GODDARD ARC FEELS THE PINCH

The Goddard Amateur Radio Club says that it has been having serious problems with manpower lately and the war on terrorism is partly to blame. This is because new security restrictions imposed after September 11th require all visitors to Goddard to be escorted by a badged employee at all times.

According to Dan Schultz, N8FGV writing to the Amsat Bulletin Board, the clubs WA3NAN ham shack is located on government property we are bound by the new restrictions. This says Schultz makes it much harder to bring in control operators who are not Goddard employees. As a result, WA3NAN which for years has been the primary rebroadcaster of shuttle communications on the ham bands is not there as often as it would like to be.

Schultz also notes that the Goddard Amateur Radio Club currently has no president because no one has stepped forward to accept the job. The position of Shuttle Retransmission Director is also vacant, this is the person who makes the phone calls to get operators lined up to pull shifts at the retransmission facility.

Schultz says that the long term technical solution will be to automate the station with remote controls and telemetry for the transmitters so that the retransmission operator can operate from his home. But adds N8FGV, but that is still a little ways off in the future. As a result, WA3NAN is not there as much as it used to be.   (AMSAT-BB)

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AMERICA AT WAR: NEW HOMELAND TERRORIST ALERT SYSTEM PROPOSED

Homeland security chief Tom Ridge is considering a multistage system for terrorism alerts. Ridge is also weighing how to reimburse states for the costs of increased security since the terror attacks.

Since the September 11th terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, Ridge has issued three general warnings.   None of the alerts identified specific targets.

Now, according to news reports, Ridge will propose a four-stage Threat Alert Network similar to the military's DEFCON'' system. DEFCON alerts military personnel to the seriousness of a threat. A private sector version would be aimed at helping state and local law enforcement personnel determine the level to react to a Federal government issued terror warning.

The proposal came to light after California Governor Gray Davis met with Ridge about a week and a half ago. Davis told Ridge he had proposed such a similar system for California, and said Ridge had asked him to wait pending a national model. Ridge told Davis that he hopes to unveil the national system by January

15th of 2002. Whether or not ham radio will play any part in such an alert system is not known as we go to air. (Published news reports)

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AMERICA AT WAR: CONFERENCE HELD ON ALERTING THE PUBLIC

Still in there area of alerting the public, more than 120 leaders from the emergency warning community met November 30th and unanimously called for the creation of a public-private partnership. This, aimed at improving the delivery of timely and accurate emergency information to people at risk. Don Wilbanks, KC5MFA reports:

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The group came together at a special conference arranged by the National Warning Organizing Committee. This is a group of emergency warning advocates representing the public and private sectors.

Those attending included federal, state and local government officials, not-for-profit organizations, and representatives from the private sector. And in the end the group has tasked itself to improve the delivery of warnings and emergency information to the public. This, through better education, research, standards creation and policy recommendations.

The Committee Chairman is David Liebersbach, Director of the Alaska Division of Emergency Services. He has appointed Peter Ward, formerly of the U.S. Geological Survey and chair of a White House-appointed working group on natural disaster information systems, to head up a committee to determine the new organization's structure and governance. Ward also serves as the new organization's spokesman. More news on the work of this committee as information is released.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, Don Wilbanks, KC5MFA, in New Orleans.

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The conference was hosted by The MITRE Corporation in McLean, Va. MITRE is a not-for-profit national technology resource that provides systems engineering, research and development, and information technology support to the government. (MITRE)

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HAM RADIO AND EDUCATION: HAM RADIO MASS BALLOON LAUNCH

The Timberlane Regional High School, in Plaistow New Hampshire will be taking part in a high altitude experiment next spring. This with an announcement that the Coordinated Algebra II and Physics classes taught by Lorainne Mascioli, N1VYQ, and Lou Broad, N1RCA, are planning thier third year of ham radio and high altitude balloons in May of 2002.

Six student teams will attempt to launch their balloons at the Hosstraders Ham Fest at the Hopkington Fair Grounds in New Hampshire. Each team is responsible for design, construction, and operation of their system. Each balloon will carry a GPS receiver, a packet reporting system and several experimental

payloads. This could include cameras, video, amateur television and cross band repeaters. At maximum altitude such systems will have a range of 300 miles and should easily cover all of New England and more.

The class has grown to 34 students and they are planning to launch six balloons in a two day period! This could make it a record breaking event in both ham radio and high altitude ballooning. For more information check out the CAPSAT Website located in cyberspace at http://www.mv.com/ipusers/llb/capsat.html (Via Internet)

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HAM RADIO SPOTLIGHTED IN POUGHKEEPSIE JOURNAL

New York’s Poughkeepsie Journal has highlighted ham radio in a December 6th front page article. The piece focused on the public service aspects ham radio with quotes and pictures.

According to Andrew Schmidt, N2FTR, who is an ARRL Assistant Director in the League’s Hudson Division, many Poughkeepsie area local hams spent time at Ground Zero or at the Red Cross centers in the greater NYC area following the September 12th terrorist attacks. Andrew says that their work is well highlighted in the article. The link is: http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/thursday/community/stories/co120601s12.shtml. (Via Internet)

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A SPECIAL AM EVENT: THE HEAVY METAL RALLYE

This is Paul Courson WA3VJB with news of an operating event Saturday night, December 22nd. It's the Heavy Metal Rally, featuring big iron, vacuum tubes, and the warm and inviting sound of AM on the shortwave ham bands.

Starting around local sunset listen for rigs in the 250 watt or 250 pound category to populate AM gathering points on 160, 75 and 40 meters.

Jim, W8MAQ was testing HIS 1947 Collins 300-G a few days ahead of the Heavy Metal Rally. The retired broadcast transmitter re-tuned to 75 meters sounded like this:

In-Q: it's been great to get on... 300-G..
Out-Q: forward to that

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Prizes include a trophy, pictured as a posting on QRZ.com, for the best sounding station.

Last year more than a hundred stations took part -- and the winner was Mike, WN3B, on a Gates 250-C. He gave Jim an audio report the other night:

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In-Q: It's got more highs....
Out-Q: Shure 55
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The Heavy Metal Rally is sponsored by Electric Radio, a magazine featuring vintage ham radio, and published by Barry N6CSW. The event was pioneered by Bill, KD0HG of Colorado, a broadcast engineer with a knack for big homebrew rigs that sound great.

Frequencies and a website are listed on the news page of QRZ.com.
Paul Courson, WA3VJB, Annapolis Maryland.

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HAM RADIO HISTORY: COLLINS RADIO CENTER NOW OPEN

The new Collins Radio Center which is the headquarters for the Collins Radio Association is now officially open for guests and visitors. Located near Johnstown, Pennsylvania, the Collins Radio Center includes a representative collection of Collins radio equipment, from the 1930's to the present. There are other classic and antique radios on display as well. More information is on the web at www.collinsra.com. (Collins RA Press release)

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HAM RADIO BUSINESS: CITY ELECTRONICS - RIP

Alex Stalinsky, WA5UHT, who owns City Electronics, a small parts outlet in Houston for almost 50 years, has decided to call it quits. According to Chris Boone, WB5ITT, this place was one of the main sources of parts, components in Houston long before the likes of Mouser and Digikey took off in mail order sales.

Chris tell Amateur Radio Newsline that he bought many parts from City Electronics in his early days of repeater building. In fact, Chris says his mother claimed that he owned half of the local Radio Shack but she was wrong. It was really like he was a part of City Electronics as were many other young Houston area hams and Chris tells Amateur Radio Newsline, it will be missed. (WB5ITT)

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BREAK 2

By telephone, satellite and the World Wide Web, we are the amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world at our only official website - www.arnewsline.org.

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: INTELS NEW WARP SPEED CHIP

In another step toward faster computers, Intel Corp. has developed two new technologies that will help the tiny transistors inside microprocessors run cooler, use less power and operate more efficiently. The new designs complement several recent breakthroughs in building minuscule transistors that form the basis of all modern computing as they switch on and off billions of times a second. Earlier this year, Intel unveiled transistors just 20 nanometers wide. Today's Pentium 4 has 42 million transistors, each about 180

nanometers. For reference, a manometer is about 10,000 times narrower than a human hair. (Intel)

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: DTV ROLLOUT UPDATE

Roughly two-thirds of commercial television stations plan to broadcast a digital signal by a federal government deadline of May 1, 2002. This, according to the National Association of Broadcasters.

In a report to the Federal Communications Commission, the industry group said that many of those that won't make the deadline are waiting for equipment to be delivered and expect to have digital broadcasts on the air in the months afterward. But some stations in smaller markets are having a hard time paying for the upgrade, the association says.

Right now, most home television sets in use receive only analog signals. But congress has mandated that broadcasters must give up their analog channels to the government by 2006. As a result, there are concerns that consumers won't have made the costly upgrade to televisions that can receive digital signals by that date. (Broadcasting Daily)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: EXPEDITION 4 CREW NOW ON THE ISS

An all ham crew is now in charge of the International Space Station and will be for the next six months.

Three astronauts and cosmonauts now running the ISS. They are Russian Commander Yuri Onufrienko, RK3DUO, along with American Flight Engineers Dan Bursch, KD5PNU, and Carl Walz, KC5TIE. They make up what is called the Expedition 4 crew and all three are expected to be on the air regularly for school contacts and possible open QSO times made available to talk with hams worldwide, as time permits.

The Expedition 3 crew comprised of United States Commander Frank Culbertson, KD5OPQ, along with Russian Flight Specialists Mikhal Tyurin and Vladimir Dezhurov is now back on good old Mother Earth. They returned on Monday, December the 17th aboard the space shuttle Endeavour. (AMSAT-NA, ARISS)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FROM VK5ZAI

Attention educators. If you are thinking about teaching the International Space Station, here is a bit of assistance.

Tony Hutchison, VK5ZAI has updated his web pages with links to help schools in obtaining educational programs associated with the I-S-S and space science in general. Hutchison says that this should be of interest students and teachers alike especially if they are contemplating applying for a ham radio contact with the astronauts on the station.

Hutchison is the Australian ARISS Coordinator. His website in cyberspace at www.electric-web.org (VK5ZAI)

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SPACE AND SCIENCE: CHINA ON THE BRINK

Space Daily reports that China is getting ready to launch its third unmanned spaceship. This, to pave the way for sending that nations first astronaut into space sometime next year. China is reportedly also in final testing and preparation to launch a new satellite dedicated to study ocean colors and related phenomena. (Space Dailey)

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DX

In DX, 9V1YC reports that he and eleven other hams will be activating South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands in January and February of 2002. The operation will be strictly on the high frequency bands. Exact dates, call signs and QSL managers are not being made public until the group is actually on the air. The New Zealand registered vessel "Braveheart" of ZL9CI fame will be supporting this team for the entire 30 day trip. (RSGB)

A bit higher in frequency, Jeff Klein, K1TEO reports that December 6th was another great D-X day on the 6 meter band. Jeff who lives in Connecticut says over the VHFReflector that the band was open for a solid two hours beginning at 7:30 am local. And talk about D-X. On his very first C-Q he landed HB9QQ who was operating portable HB0. Even better, Jeff says that the fifth caller was 4X1RF. (VHF Reflector)

Over in Great Britain hams are actually D-Xing for charity. Jeramy Boot G4NJH, reports from Nottingham in the U-K.

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Every year in September, the British Wireless Fund for the Blind -- a registered charity - organises a fund-raising event in which amateur radio clubs and individuals are sponsored for the number and distance of the contacts that they make. As of the 11th of December, the British Wireless for the Blind Fund reported that 'Transmission 2001' had raised 6681.48, with more coming in every day. They say that they hope the final total will reach 7000. The charity offers prizes to the club and individual raising the greatest amounts.

This year the Cray Valley Radio Society operating as GB2FB and taking part for the first time, won the prizes for the club raising the most money and for making the most contacts. Robert Guscott, M5GUS, operating as GB0WB, won the prize for the leading individual.

Jeramy Boot, G4NJH.

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The bottom line. This is another way that hams can not only enjoy their hobby, but can help others at the same time. (G4NJH)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: A HAM RADIO CHRISTMAS STORY

And finally this week, the story that we wait all year to tell you. Its the ongoing story of hams who care about hospitalized children and what they do to bring a bit of holiday cheer to those kids who cannot make it to the mall to spend a few moments with old Saint Nick. Here’s Amateur Radio Newsline’s Joe Moell, K0OV:

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As most hams know, propagation is very good this time of year. It's so good that it's easy to make contact with the North Pole. Many clubs around the country are taking advantage of these propagation conditions to set up QSOs with a very special North Pole station. They're making these contacts from hospitals and rehabilitation centers, and they sound like this:

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Santa and Kids Audio Here
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That's what the North Pole Network sounds like in southern California, where it's celebrating its 25th anniversary at Childrens Hospital of Orange County. In the past few days, I've heard from other clubs in the North Pole Network, including the AkSarBen ARC in Omaha and the Southwest Missouri ARC in Springfield. And YOUR club could bring holiday joy to hospital patients. There's a how-to article on the subject, with a dozen suggestions for your best North Pole Network ever, currently running on ARRL's Web site. That's arrl.org, of course. And there's even more about North Pole Network in southern California, plus lots of photos showing a quarter century of holiday fun, at the Hospital Disaster Support Communications System Web site, www.hdscs.org. Check it out, and start planning for your own North Pole Network joy.

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Santa And Kids Audio Here
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Joe Moell K-zero-Oscar-Victor for Amateur Radio Newsline.

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>From us here at Amateur Radio Newsline: A Merry Christmas to those very special kids and a Merry Christmas to all of you.

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, Amateur News Weekly, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB and Australia's Q-News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at

Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

Before we go, some get well wishes to our longtime friend Ron Broadbent, G3AAJ. Ron is the former Secretary of AMSAT-UK. He is in the hospital in the U-K and will be undergoing surgery. AMSAT says that he hopes to be home by Christmas. Get well wishes can be sent by e-mail to g3aaj@amsat.org.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Jeff Clark, K8JAC and I'm Jim Damron, N8TMW, saying Happy Holidays, God Bless America, 73, and we thank you for listening." Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) is Copyright 2001. All rights reserved.